



Pet greyhound Post adoption care guide

This guide provides important information about owning a pet greyhound and some helpful hints about settling the greyhound into your home.



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Bringing your greyhound home

Bringing your new greyhound home for the first time is an exciting and rewarding experience. It can however be a stressful time for a greyhound and it is important that you take the time to help your greyhound feel safe and comfortable in its new surroundings. Greyhounds love routine, so be clear, consistent, and patient; they will soon come to understand what is expected.

Preparation

Before bringing your greyhound home you will need to create a designated area for them to retreat to, with comfortable bedding and non-spillable water bowl. This can be:

-  an enclosed garden or outside area with shelter;
-  a dog run with a kennel;
-  a laundry or small room with a child gate so the dog can see out but other animals and children cannot gain access; or
-  a crate (not all greyhounds will be comfortable in a crate and may require crate training).

You may wish to provide a combination of the above. In households with young children and other animals, it is very important the greyhound has a 'time-out' area that allows them to see the

family and feel part of it, but also separates them from children and other pets so they can rest and feel safe. It is also important to teach your children to respect the dog's space around food and bedding (additional information about greyhounds and children is provided later in this guide). Resource guarding (protecting bedding and food) is not uncommon in greyhounds as it is in many other breeds of dog. Placing food bowls and beds in time-out areas can be a good way to prevent resource guarding from impacting on children and other pets in your household.

Your greyhound is most likely accustomed to an environment where they have their own space (such as in a kennel). Some greyhounds have more experience with outdoor environments and some are more used to indoor kennel environments.

Suitable bedding options include a folded doona or blankets or a large dog bed from a pet shop. If the greyhound has a bed outside, it is important that it is raised off the ground to ensure the bedding remains warm and dry. Hammock beds with a blanket on top may be a good option for outside. Ideally, a bed should be placed in the corner of a room to reduce the chance of someone accidentally making contact with the greyhound while he is sleeping or relaxing.

Remember, if your greyhound is sleeping outside during cooler weather, it may also need a warm rug. Greyhounds have a short coat and a relatively thin skin, so they feel the cold. Your greyhound's bed should also be placed undercover where it has protection from the weather, particularly wind and rain, but also sun in the hotter months.



Arriving home



It is important to keep your initial arrival home as calm as possible and try not to overwhelm your greyhound. Ensure that you and your family give your greyhound some space to begin with. Allow them to come to you when they are ready and don't shower them with attention or try to cuddle them.

When you first arrive home, allow your greyhound time to explore their new surroundings. Keeping the greyhound on leash, visit all of the areas that the greyhound will have access to and introduce him/her to their safe space and bedding.

Those greyhounds that come from mostly indoor kennel environments, are usually trained to only go to the toilet outside; so it is a good idea to show your greyhound your back yard and where you want them to toilet, before bringing them inside the house.

Give them some time to explore their new backyard with you close by. When you think the greyhound is nearly ready to go, physically take the greyhound to the area that you expect them to use and then reinforce successful toileting in that place with lots of praise and/or some treats.

Once they have toileted and seem relatively relaxed, you can begin to introduce them to the inside of their new home.

Your greyhound will be unsettled and unsure of its new surroundings, so 'accidents' in the first couple of weeks may happen. If this occurs, you should not punish the greyhound (i.e. do not shout or rub his/her nose in it), this may make the problem worse. Instead, clean the area thoroughly and immediately take the greyhound outside to its toileting area. Praise the greyhound when he does the right thing.

We need to remember that coming into a new home can expose the greyhound to many new experiences that can sometimes lead to an information overload. We want to introduce them to one space at a time to avoid them becoming overwhelmed.

Avoid inviting too many people over to meet your greyhound in the first week or so. Let him or her settle in and begin to know their family before they are required to learn about other new people. If your greyhound appears anxious or stressed, keep his world small. Don't take him for big walks around the neighbourhood or outings in the car - allow him the time to slowly get used to your own home before introducing him to new experiences and people.

When your greyhound first comes home they can find trivial home life and traffic noise very scary as they have not experienced them before. Most greyhounds grow up and live in rural areas where life is much quieter. Many greyhounds have also not spent much time inside households to get used to these noises. For example, trains, trams, cars, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, dishwashers etc. If your greyhound is showing signs of distress when they hear unfamiliar household and city noises or other loud noises, there are some great tips later in this booklet in the section titled: Fear of loud noises.

If you already have other pets, it is important to control the introduction. If you own another dog, it is recommended that the initial introduction take place in an open and neutral space without any other dog's present. A quiet sporting oval or street is ideal. Both dogs must be leashed, and your greyhound must be muzzled. Allow the dogs to calmly greet while both on leash and smell each other, if there is too much excitement, move them apart until they settle.

When at home, ensure that you always feed the dogs separately and that you carefully supervise the dogs' interactions in the first two weeks. If you are unable to supervise the dogs during this period, you should keep them physically separated; placing your greyhound in his safe space. It is important that this safe space allows your greyhound to observe and feel part of the family, while still being separated from your other dogs (and pets and children). This can be achieved by creating a safe space within the family areas using playpens, baby gates or a crate. Some greyhounds will not be comfortable in a crate, but others will. Information in relation to greyhounds and cats can be found later in this document.

Have a discussion with your children, particularly young children, about allowing the greyhound to have a special space. When the greyhound is in their special place, children and adults leave the greyhound undisturbed. More information about managing children around greyhounds is provided later in this document; however, it is important that the whole family chooses an appropriate place for their greyhound's special place and everyone respects that space.

Feeding



Greyhounds are generally most content when fed twice per day in roughly equal amounts. It is recommended that you feed your greyhound in the morning and in the evening. Your greyhound may still be in 'racing condition' at the time of adoption and may need to gain some weight. Ideally you should be able to feel your greyhound's ribs but not see them.

Complete dry foods are often an effective and efficient way of feeding, and ensure your greyhound gets all the nutrients, vitamins, and minerals required to be healthy. Look for a premium brand that contains around 26% protein and a minimum of 15% fat, and lists meat as the first ingredient (cheaper brands tend to have cereals as the main ingredient, while mid-range brands have meat by-products as the main ingredient). Follow the feeding instructions on the packaging according to the weight of your dog, but adjust the amount based on your greyhound's condition. Often greyhounds find dry food easier to swallow if it has been soaked in some warm water.

Greyhounds should NEVER be fed cooked bones as these can splinter and cause serious health issues.

Canned dog foods are generally not recommended as they tend not to agree with the greyhound digestive system and often result in diarrhea and/or flatulence.

Fresh water must be available for the greyhound at all times. Never leave your greyhound without water. Some greyhounds 'play' with their water dishes and might tip them over, so make sure that bowls are of a non-tip design.

As with all large breeds of dogs, exercise, drinking excessive amounts of water and excessive excitement around meal times should be avoided to prevent a condition commonly called 'bloat' (gastric dilatation and volvulus, GDV or gastric torsion). This is a life-threatening condition which can result in death within a few hours if untreated. Symptoms include a swollen abdomen, gagging, restlessness, rapid pulse and breathing. If you suspect bloat, you must take your greyhound to a veterinarian immediately (day or night).

Prevention of bloat involves the following:

-  not feeding large amounts of food in one session; instead spread meals over two smaller meals;
-  not exercising your greyhound for at least an hour before and 1 hours after eating; ensuring that water is readily available at all times so the greyhound does not gulp down large amounts of water at one time; and purchasing special bowls which include obstacles to slow eating if your greyhound is a rapid eater.



Exercise



Although greyhounds are the fastest breed of dog, they achieve their incredible speed in one all out sprint and do not have a lot of endurance. For this reason, greyhounds require less exercise than most breeds of dogs and are generally happy with one or two short walks per day of around 15-20 minutes. If you intend to walk your greyhound for longer periods, you will need to start at 20 minutes and gradually build up their stamina.

Remember your greyhound must be kept on a leash at all times when in public. While there are off-leash dog parks in Victoria, Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) does not recommend taking greyhounds to them. If greyhounds are taken to off-leash parks they must remain leashed. Further information about leashing is provided later in this document.

Enrichment

All dogs need mental exercise as well as physical exercise to make them a happy and well-adjusted pet and to prevent any undesirable behaviours that manifest as a result of boredom, such as digging and barking. Your greyhound should be provided with toys to play with, this may include chew toys, rope toys or kongs (rubber dog toys in which food can be hidden). Other activities you may include are hiding small amounts of food around the outdoor area for the greyhound to find or freeze a treat in an ice block (water or stock) for the greyhound to lick and chew (also good for cooling in summer).



Ongoing care



When you bring your greyhound home, the information you have received from the former owner or shelter or rehoming group should include:

-  De-sexing status
-  Vaccination dates and due dates
-  Worming dates and due dates (and brand of wormer if possible)
-  Teeth - history of cleaning and other dental treatments
-  Feeding and exercise history



Information on greyhound's general behaviour

First Veterinary Check: If you have adopted your greyhound privately (not from a shelter or rehoming group), it is important to book your greyhound in with your veterinarian within the first week or two of bringing him/her home. The timing of this first veterinary check will depend on your greyhound's history, gender and his/her coping skills.

De-sexing: Greyhounds should all be de-sexed if they are being kept as a pet. De-sexing has many health benefits including reducing risks of reproductive cancer, reducing risks of prostate issues in male, eliminating seasonal bleeding in females; and influencing temperament. De-sexed dogs are also cheaper to register with local council.

Teeth: Tartar can build up quickly if dental hygiene is not maintained. Large raw bones, raw chicken frames and dog chews can help to maintain good dental hygiene. You should have your veterinarian check your greyhound's teeth at your first visit post adoption.

Skin/Coat: Your greyhound should be washed as needed (but no more than once a month) in dog shampoo or eucalyptus wool wash. Some greyhounds appear very relaxed and will wobble or fall over when washed in warm water. This is not unusual greyhound behaviour and the dogs recover quickly if you get them up and lead them around for a few minutes.

Intestinal Worms, Heart Worms and Fleas: Your greyhound will require regular worming and flea control in order to remain in good health and to prevent some types of worms being passed onto humans and their environment. There are multiple products on the market that control intestinal worms and/or heart worm as well as combination medications that in some cases also control fleas and mites. You should speak to your veterinarian about an appropriate parasite control protocol for your greyhound.

Toe Nails: You should not allow your greyhound's nails to grow too long as it can lead to problems with their toes. You should trim your greyhound's nails regularly or have your veterinarian do it for you if you are not sure. A good guide to see if your greyhound's nails are too long is to stand him/her on a hard-flat surface and see if you can slide a piece of paper between his nails and the ground. If you can not, then the nails are too long and need trimming.

Vaccinations: You should have been provided with details of your greyhound's vaccination history by the previous owner. Please speak to your veterinarian about an appropriate ongoing vaccination regime for your greyhound.



Legal requirements for owning a greyhound

Local council registration

You will need to register your pet greyhound with your local council. Council registration and microchip registration (see next section below) are different types of registration. Please contact your local council for information about how to register your greyhound with them. Your greyhound's microchip is already registered with GRV (see below).

Further information about dog ownership in Victoria including legal requirements can be found here: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/dogs>

Microchipping

If you have previously owned a dog other than a greyhound or a cat, you may be familiar with your pet's microchip number being registered with a Microchip Registry, such as Central Animal Records (CAR) or Australasia Animal Register (AAR). Your greyhound is microchipped and registered on the Greyhound Microchip Registry (GMR) (as greyhounds are not generally registered on other registries).

The Greyhound Microchip Registry keeps a record of the current ownership details of the greyhound, which enables local council, shelters, and pounds to make swift contact with the current owner should the greyhound happen to wander from home. As such, it is very important that the contact details recorded on the Greyhound Microchip Registry are current and kept up to date.

When you adopt a greyhound, the previous owner or shelter/rehoming group must submit a **Notice of Retirement as a Pet - Transfer to New Owner** form which will provide the Greyhound Microchip Registry with your contact details for the registry record. This form must be signed by both parties. You will also need to provide details of a secondary contact person that can be contacted if your greyhound is found and you are uncontactable.

You will need to ensure that your contact details remain up to date. If your address or phone number changes you can notify the Greyhound Microchip Registry by submitting a **Change of Contact Details (Retired Greyhound)** form. If you re-home the greyhound to another person, you should ensure that a **Change of Ownership (Retired Greyhound)** form is submitted.

The GRV **Notice of Retirement as a Pet - Transfer to New Owner** form can be found in the Re-homing Pack. All forms and further information about the Greyhound Microchip Registry can be found at <https://greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/grv-microchip-registry/> and re-homing at <https://greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/rehoming>

If you have any questions about the Greyhound Microchip Registry, please contact GRV on (03) 8329 1139.



Muzzles

It is recommended that all greyhounds are fitted with a correctly fitting wire or plastic muzzle specifically designed for greyhounds when being introduced to other pets or small children for the first time, or if there are ever any concerns for safety of small animals (see "Managing prey drive" on page 11).

There is no shame in using a muzzle (and greyhounds are quite comfortable wearing them) so if you have any concerns whatsoever, it's better to be safe. Please never use the Velcro style muzzles on your greyhound as they don't allow him/her to open his mouth to pant and drink.

Leash requirements



All greyhounds (including greyhounds with a GAP Green Collar) must be on leash and under effective control at all times when away from their home property. This applies to any public area, including off-leash dog parks. GRV does not recommend that greyhounds are taken to off-leash parks.

Greyhounds run at speeds in excess of 60km/h and almost all have very poor recall skills. They often will not come when called if they see something that takes their attention. This means that there is a high risk of greyhounds being seriously injured or killed by running out in front of cars or injuring themselves on objects.

Should your greyhound be off-leash and become involved in an incident with another dog, not only could you be fined by your council, but you may also be liable for any injuries or veterinary bills incurred by the other party. In addition, Victorian laws regarding dangerous dogs, may result in you

being taken to court and your greyhound being declared dangerous. For more information on dangerous and menacing dogs please visit <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/dogs/dog-attacks-dangerous-and-menacing-dogs>



More information

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* outlines the requirements for racing and pet greyhounds. You can view the entire act at <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>

For more information about your legal responsibilities as a greyhound owner in Victoria please visit: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/dogs/legal-requirements-for-dog-owners>

Please do not use retractable leads. These are dangerous and give you very poor control over your dog.



Things you should know about greyhounds

Managing prey drive



Prey drive refers to an animal's natural desire to chase and kill prey animals for food. This exists in many animals and all breeds of dogs, but is more evident in sighthounds (including greyhounds). It is also referred to as 'predatory behaviour' or 'predation', and mostly occurs when the dog is relaxed and in a positive mental state.

Prey drive is a very different behaviour to aggression which is usually anxiety or fear-based; aggression is in a negative mental state and a protective mechanism.

Some greyhounds may not have had much exposure to small dog breeds. If a greyhound does not recognise a small dog as a being a dog, it may mistake it for a prey animal and direct predatory behaviour towards it. Similarly, greyhounds (like many dogs) may display predatory behaviour towards other small animals such as cats or chickens. Greyhounds can be taught to recognise these animals as fellow pets and not prey, but this may take some time and require careful introductions using a muzzle.

It is important to understand that your greyhound may be well behaved with your other pets that it knows well and has a bond with; but can show predatory behaviour towards other unfamiliar small animals in different environments, such as at the park.

Prey drive is not related to chase motivation, which is the desire to chase an object that is not an animal. Some greyhounds with strong chase motivation can be very safe with small dogs (i.e. low levels of predatory behaviour towards small dogs), while some quiet greyhounds, who do not chase the lure well, can show high levels of predatory behaviour towards small dogs.

To get more information about a greyhound's level of predatory behaviour, you can speak to the owner of the greyhound or re-homing group before you adopt. This will help you to understand whether that greyhound is suitable for your circumstances.

You may choose to have your greyhound assessed for its level of predatory behaviour. GAP (Victoria) provides short temperament assessments (called a PetCheck) which tests the greyhound's level of predatory behaviour towards small dogs. If the greyhound shows moderate or high levels of predatory behaviour, an experienced GAP Assessor will be able to provide you with information about further training and how to best manage the behaviour. For further information about the GAP assessments, please phone (03) 5799 0166.

Greyhounds with moderate to high prey drive can still make excellent pets in the right home. Owners of these greyhounds must, however, be careful about how they manage the greyhound when in public or around small animals. If you have any concerns about the greyhound's level of prey drive, you should fit the greyhound with a muzzle, regardless of whether it has a GAP Green Collar or is not legally required to wear one.

Most greyhounds are used to wearing a muzzle for racing, so they are not bothered by them. You can purchase a greyhound muzzle in pet stores or online.

Greyhounds and cats



All dogs have a natural desire to chase prey animals and many will chase a cat if they have the chance. While greyhounds can be perfectly tolerant of cats, there are some greyhounds with moderate to high levels of predatory behaviour that may be unsafe for a home with cats. These greyhounds could be fine with a cat they come to know; however, if the cat were to run from a greyhound in an environment that could give rise to a chase, there may be danger.

New greyhound owners with cats should exercise caution when introducing the greyhound to the cat; they should ensure the greyhound is muzzled and held on a leash when this occurs. It is recommended that the greyhound and cat are not left unsupervised or in an environment where a chase is possible.

Greyhounds and anxiety



Greyhounds, like any other breed of dog, can suffer from anxiety. When moving to a new home, greyhounds are exposed to a new people, new environments, potentially other animals, and a range of new stimuli they may not be familiar with. Like people, greyhounds can find change stressful, and they may become anxious or nervous.

Signs that may indicate that your greyhound is becoming anxious include:

-  alert or uneasy appearance, unable to stand still or sit/lay in a relaxed posture;
-  pacing, scanning the environment;
-  shaking, cowering;
-  avoiding an object, animal or person;
-  withdrawn and reluctant to interact;
-  submissive body posture, tail between legs, clinging to your side;
-  excessive or unusual urination or defaecation;
-  increased vocalisation, (i.e. bark, whimper, whine or growl or some other type of distress signal); or
-  excessive salivation and/or panting; and
-  reluctance to eat.

This is not an extensive list. If your greyhound is showing these types of behaviours you may need to seek help from a dog trainer or animal/veterinary behaviourist. You may also contact GAP for further information.

Isolation and separation anxiety

Most greyhounds have lived their lives in the company of other greyhounds. This means that when they are adopted into a home as a pet, they can become anxious if suddenly left on their own. It can take time for a greyhound to become accustomed to the new living arrangements.

To help your greyhound adjust to pet life, encourage him/her to spend at least four hours a day outside in your backyard for the first few weeks. He/she will likely adjust more quickly and be less likely to develop separation anxiety. If you have him/her with you constantly as he/she settles in he/she will become deeply bonded very quickly and will likely become stressed when you leave him/her. After the first few weeks, when he/she is settled and comfortable in your backyard, you can then allow him/her as much inside time as you like.



Strategies to assist with managing separation or isolation anxiety are as follows:

-  take the greyhound out for a walk before you leave so they are tired and likely to sleep while you are out;
-  do not engage in long goodbyes as this may distress the greyhound, instead get up and casually leave;
-  do not make your return exciting, just say hello to the dog and continue with your tasks. Five or ten minutes later you can calmly greet the dog in a low-key manner, only when the dog has settled;
-  do not allow your greyhound to get accustomed to your undivided attention when you are at home. Allow the greyhound to spend time away from you (i.e. outside) while you are still there and provide them with things to occupy themselves with to make the experience positive and rewarding. Encouraging your greyhound to be your shadow will make him/her emotionally dependent on you. If he/she follows you around, ignore them and only give a pat once calm and settled; and when you leave the greyhound alone, ensure that they greyhound has some toys to play with and is warm and dry so that they are not distressed when you leave.

Fear and anxiety triggered aggression

While greyhounds are generally touted as a very gentle breed, all dogs, including greyhounds, may respond with aggression if they are fearful. The aggression displayed when a dog is fearful can be viewed as them trying to protect themselves from whatever they are afraid of. Fear is a normal response to situations that an individual perceives could threaten their health and safety.

So what do you need to look for? Signs of fear might include:

-  licking the lips;
-  yawning;
-  turning the eyes;
-  turning the head;
-  a type of grimace with their brow furrowed and lips pulled back;
-  shaking; and
-  a desire to avoid or remove themselves from the situation.

Greyhounds are notorious for giving a 'freeze' response. They just get a bit of a glazed look and do nothing. Doing nothing does not mean that they are OK. You need to look for this response and act on it the same way you would if the dog was showing more obvious behaviours.

When a greyhound indicates it is fearful or anxious (not coping) with an environment or interaction with another animal or person, removing the greyhound from the situation and distancing them from the threat is the best answer.

If an owner does nothing and the warning signs are ignored, the greyhound may move from mild arousal and anxiety, to a more overt fearful response - the fight, flight, freeze or fidget response and the situation may possibly escalate to aggression.

If your greyhound's behaviour is a concern, your first step should be a veterinary health check. This can help rule out a medical cause for your greyhound's behaviour. If a greyhound is unwell, or has painful areas, they may show signs of aggression because they are protecting themselves. It may not be their normal reaction.

Aggressive behaviour can usually be managed. The greyhound can undergo behavioural modification training to improve the responses to trigger events. There are veterinarians who have additional training in behaviour - called 'veterinary behaviourists' and these are the people best placed to develop training programs and support you. But it is important to consider everyone's safety before going ahead with this sort of treatment.

Risk factors to be considered include:

-  whether or not there are children in the household;
-  whether there are elderly or frail people in the household;
-  whether the incidents are predictable;
-  whether the triggers are easy to identify;
-  whether you are committed to long term changes and have reasonable expectations;
-  whether there have been any injuries inflicted to people or other animals.

If your greyhound has shown signs of aggression such as growling or snapping at other dogs or people, please contact your veterinarian for referral to a veterinary behaviourist (NOT a dog trainer). The Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) staff are also available to any greyhound owner if they need immediate advice or a referral to the right help.

GAP can be contacted on [\(03\) 5799 0166](tel:0357990166).



Greyhounds and resource guarding



Resource guarding in greyhounds is not uncommon, and is when a dog displays mild to moderate aggressive behaviour around their personal areas including food and water bowls, bedding, kennel, toys and sleeping area.

Often, greyhounds are raised with their litter mates in a pack until they are 20 weeks old.

After 20 weeks of age, greyhound pups may be group housed or housed in pairs until they reach their race pre-training stage. At these stages of life, greyhounds may be required to share food and water bowls, toys and bed space.

During training and racing, greyhounds tend to be individually housed and their food and water bowls, bedding, toys etc are their own, so they do not have to share.

This upbringing may pre-dispose some greyhounds to resource guarding. Most rescue groups, shelters and foster carers will have spent time working with their greyhounds, prior to adoption, to correct resource guarding behaviour. However, if your greyhound was adopted directly from a trainer, you may see these behaviours in your new greyhound.

Resource guarding is a behaviour that we can change relatively easily through training; but it is a serious behaviour if not managed properly. Dogs are predators, so they are pre-programmed to protect important resources such as food, water and sleeping areas.

To address resource guarding successfully, you need to work with your greyhound to teach them that the approach by you or another human to his/her food, toys, bed or space is a good thing. Before beginning any training, you should seek expert help from your veterinarian, a dog trainer, your adoption agency/shelter/rescue group or GAP.

However, here are some simple management techniques:

1. Always provide your greyhound with their own time-out or safe space. Food, water and treats should be first made available there and, while they are still resource guarding, this area should be blocked from entry by children and other pets/animals;

2. Teach your greyhound the command GIVE/ MINE. Start with objects that he/she does not value as much as treats (which are highly valued). Then gradually work your way up to objects that he/she cares very much about. Ask him/her to give you the object, then either wait for them to do so (if they know the cue) or cause them to do so by presenting food near their mouth. Reward and praise him/her for dropping the object, then give it back to them as soon as they are done chewing.

Practising this cue and giving the resource back each time helps your greyhound understand that giving away their resources to a human is a good thing, so there's no reason to guard them. Children should only work on this step under adult supervision. Start with the family member that the greyhound trusts most.

3. Condition your greyhound to expect good things when you approach, especially if they have some sort of highly prized resource, like a bone. As with "give", start with something your dog does not guard. Walk over, present the treat while they are enjoying their low value toy or food, and leave. Do this with several low value toys throughout the day. Repeat this for several days until he/she begins to look up at you, with a "Hey, she's here to give me a treat" expression on his face. With the low value objects, move up to touching the dog in some way, grabbing the object (often saying "give" first), then popping a high value treat in their mouth and returning the object.



Over a period of weeks or more, gradually move up to repeating the above with higher and higher value toys or food. With high value items, start by just walking by the dog, out of the range that makes him growl, and dropping a treat. Move closer as the days go by, if the dog is ready; never progress faster than your dog is happily willing to go. If the dog is not relaxed and happy at any stage, you have moved too fast, so retreat to the previous level. Repeat this entire process with several high value objects.

After that, progress to doing this process with more people around, more stress in the environment. Children should only work on the conditioning step under adult supervision.

Maintenance: After your greyhound is happily accepting any human approach to its food or toys, you are at the maintenance stage. Twice a week, at first, then once or twice per month, approach while they're eating, pick up the bowl, and plop in a handful of treats before setting it back down. Do the same with toys or bones as well.

Practise the "give or mine" command, replacing the surrendered object with something else if you really must take it away.

If your dog ever starts up again with resource guarding, it's probably because you haven't kept up on the training and they have started to notice that it's not such a good thing to give up their resources, after all. Remind them that humans are the source of all good things by going through the above process again.

Greyhounds and sleep startle



Sleep startle, or sleep aggression as it is sometimes called, is growling or snapping when a sleeping greyhound is bumped or disturbed. It is an automatic reaction to being abruptly woken from sleep and is perfectly normal. Sometimes, your greyhound's eyes may be partially open, and you may think he/she is awake, yet they startle, growl and even snap when they are touched. This is because despite the partially opened eyes, your greyhound was sleeping.

The best management for this behaviour is to ensure sleeping areas are away from high traffic areas or areas where people move around and can accidentally wake a deeply sleeping greyhound. If your greyhound likes to sleep/rest with the family while you are watching tv or reading or talking, make sure the family is aware and is careful not to accidentally wake the greyhound.

Listen to your greyhound. If he snaps or growls when disturbed while he is sleeping, he is telling you he is not comfortable with this and that's ok. Respect his boundaries.

If you need to wake your greyhound, or you are unsure if they are awake, begin by calling their name until they show definite signs of wakefulness. Then you may approach or begin to move them.



Fear of loud noises

Fear of loud noises such as thunderstorms or fireworks is quite a common complaint from dog owners of all breeds. The worst times of the year tend to be around New Year's Eve when there are lots of fireworks, and in spring and summer when significant storms are more likely to occur.

It is not uncommon for a greyhound to develop noise phobias as they age. Age-related changes in hearing and/or sight, or in older greyhounds, chronic pain due to arthritis are all thought to affect the way greyhounds respond to sudden loud noises.



For some greyhounds, the fear of loud noises is based on 'one-event learning'; where the noise has been paired with a very frightening experience, such as something falling on them during a storm. For others, the fear develops gradually with repeated exposure. **If you notice your greyhound becoming more sensitive to noises, please seek help!**

What you can do to prevent and treat a greyhound developing a noise fear or phobia

With each exposure to fear-inducing noises, there is the potential for a greyhound to become more fearful. The **first step is to look at ways in which the fear-inducing noises can be avoided or exposure to them minimised.** The most obvious way to achieve this are to:

-  **move the greyhound away from the sound** e.g. move the greyhound temporarily away - this can be a good idea if you are able to anticipate an event such as fireworks;



-  **stop the sound occurring** when the greyhound is nearby (e.g. avoid using power tools, lawn mowers and/or whipper snippers); or

-  **avoid the situation entirely** (e.g. don't walk your greyhound near busy roads or take your greyhound for a walk when a neighbour is about to mow the lawn or use the whipper snipper).

When it comes to storms, most of the above options are not suitable as you cannot control or avoid the weather. The following options can help to reduce the fear response:

-  using **music**, the TV, a fan or a white noise CD to help dull the sound;
-  **blocking out light** (e.g. covering windows to block out flashes of lightening).

For serious responses to thunderstorms, you should consider creating a **safe space** for the greyhound where they can feel protected. Think about where your dog heads when they are feeling scared. Some dogs prefer a small, dark, enclosed space, whereas others prefer to be near their owner. If your greyhound is crate-trained, popping the crate inside a built-in wardrobe or other space with no windows, then covering it with heavy blankets is a great option. Creating a 'bunker' by covering a small table with heavy blankets, then popping it between a wall and some heavy furniture such as a couch will often help too.

If you cannot limit your greyhound's exposure to the noise to a level that they can cope with and remain calm, then you must seek help from your veterinarian to develop a medication plan. Remember, medication is not a cure, so it is important to combine it with professional advice and behavioural management.

Some final tips for dealing with fearful or noise phobic greyhounds

-  Always seek veterinary advice early on if your greyhound is becoming increasingly fearful of loud noises - treatment is more successful if started early.
-  Always seek advice from a veterinarian with expertise in dog behaviour for identifying the best options for a phobic greyhound.
-  Do not use Acepromazine (ACP) to sedate fearful dogs. This drug sedates the dog but does not stop the dog feeling fearful, which results in an increase in the phobic response over time.
-  Thundershirts and Adaptil collars are useful relaxation aids for fearful greyhounds.

Greyhounds and children



As with any breed of dog, children must not be left unsupervised with your greyhound. Regardless of how long you have known the dog or how good either the dog or child is considered to be, they should never be left alone unsupervised. The biggest risk factor for dog bites (all breeds) is lack of parental supervision.

It is important to remember that many racing greyhounds will not have had much, if any, exposure to children before retirement and, therefore, may find children a little frightening at first. Children will not usually be able to tell a greyhound is scared or uncomfortable. Children should be educated to be calm and gentle with the greyhound and to have respect for his/her space and “time-out” area; i.e. the greyhound’s bed.

The whole family should abide by the following rules:

-  do not hug the greyhound, especially around the neck;
-  never kiss or put your face near the greyhound’s face;
-  do not approach the greyhound when he is laying down, even if he is awake. Call the greyhound over to you. Many greyhounds do not like being disturbed when they are laying down, and some can also sleep very deeply and sometime with their eyes open. They may become frightened and react defensively if startled;
-  do not approach the greyhound when eating or try to take away his/her food while eating;
-  do not tease the greyhound or play roughly by pushing, grabbing, poking or climbing on the greyhound; and
-  avoid yelling, screaming or making very loud noises around the greyhound.

It is important that parents understand the signs of the greyhound becoming uncomfortable or scared during an interaction with a child. If you notice the greyhound displaying any of the following behaviours, you should immediately separate the child from the greyhound:

-  yawning;
-  blinking excessively;
-  lip licking;
-  turning the head away;
-  showing the white part of the eye;
-  stiffened posture;
-  ears pulled back;
-  attempting to get way; or
-  growling. or snapping



Teaching your greyhound to greet dogs calmly on leash

Like all pet dogs, greyhounds need to be taught to greet other dogs calmly on leash.

The basic principle of a good loose leash greeting is that all dogs are calm and in control before they are allowed to meet another dog.



They then can approach on a slight angle to the other dog and have a quick on-leash greet before returning to their handler for a reward. The two most common behaviour problems that arise during on-leash greetings with other breeds of dogs are:

Fear based aggression towards other dogs while on leash, including barking, lunging and growling at other dogs during on-leash interactions.

Commonly called 'leash reactivity', these behaviours are often simply due to lack of leash greeting skills and experience. Leash reactivity is common in many pet dogs, and is usually resolved relatively easily with practice and a supportive handler.

Predatory behaviour towards other dogs, including lunging, nose bumping and grabbing and attempting to maul.

Dog-to-dog predatory grabbing is a particularly problematic behaviour as it happens fast, and there are usually no warning signs visible to inexperienced greyhound owners. Greyhound does not display normal social signals to warn the other dog of the impending attack, and the precursor behaviours displayed by the greyhound are often mistaken by the public for friendly interest or simple excitability.

Predatory behaviour is also highly rewarding for the greyhound, so it is vitally important that all retired greyhounds learn to approach and greet other dogs calmly and are never allowed to practise greeting other breeds of dogs while highly excited or while displaying signs of predatory interest.

Step-by-step instructions for teaching loose leash greetings:

1. With the greyhound on your preferred side, hold the leash using both hands so that you can guide the greyhound through the greeting safely (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Appropriate Leash Holding

2. Have your greyhound on a loose leash and paying attention to you.
3. Allow greyhound to approach another dog that is also on leash while walking on a loose leash. (Figure 2)



Figure 2: Appropriate Approach

4. As long as the greyhound remains calm, allow the greyhound to greet the other dog for 2-3 seconds, then call them to you while you walk away.
5. When the greyhound turns away from the other dog, reward them (verbal praise, food treats or pats are all appropriate) while you continue to move away (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Appropriate Approach and Walking Away

6. Practice this until the greyhound can calmly approach, greet and disengage from the other dog within 3 seconds with minimal help from the handler.

Important things to note:

If at any stage the greyhound pulls on the leash, **immediately turn and walk away from the other dog**. If you like, you can use a verbal cue such as 'Too bad' to indicate that the greyhound has made a mistake, then walk them at a distance from the other dog until they are able to walk calmly again. Once they are calm and walking on a loose leash, try approaching again.

If at any time the greyhound shows intense focus or predatory interest towards the other dog, interrupt the behaviour immediately and walk the greyhound away. When the greyhound calms down and can focus on you, they may be allowed to return to try again.

If you are unable to get the greyhound's focus off of the other dog, they take a long time to calm down, or you are not able to reach the other dog while your greyhound remains calm within **three** trials, they may not have the skills yet to be able to greet this dog safely. You can try practising with a larger and calmer dog **or** seek the input of a trainer experienced in teaching greyhounds how to socialise with other breeds of dog.

All on-leash greetings should be kept to a **maximum of 2-3 seconds long**, at which time the dogs involved return to their owners and are rewarded. This is the period of time that unfamiliar dogs will normally spend greeting before they either challenge each other or invite the other dog to play.

Never allow a greeting to go on for longer than 3 seconds. If you would like your greyhound to spend more time with the other dog, parallel walk with the other dog and handler until the dogs are able to calmly walk side-by-side.

Start with large or medium sized dogs with a calm temperament and only progress to smaller dogs as the greyhound is able to consistently greet the other dogs appropriately.



Congratulations on becoming the owner of a pet greyhound!

Should you have any questions about greyhounds
as a breed or you experience any behavioural
issues, you are welcome to contact GAP on
(03) 5799 0166 for information.

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